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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/700,794	11/04/2003	Paul E. West	PACI002	5509

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EXAMINER

WYATT, KEVIN S

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2878

DATE MAILED: 07/14/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/700,794

Applicant(s)

WEST ET AL.

Examiner

Kevin Wyatt

Art Unit

2878

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 07 April 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 07 April 2006 and 04 November 2003 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. This Office Action is in response to the Amendment after non-final and remarks filed on 04/07/2006. Currently, claims 1-26 are pending.

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to because figure numbers, reference numbers and/or designators for Figs. 1-11 are hand written and characters for Figs. 1-4B, 6-7 and 9-11 are hand drawn. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-2, 4, 6, 9-10, and 12-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,227 B1) in view of Kley (Publication No. U.S. 2002/0135755 A1).

Regarding claim 1, Tomita shows in Figs.1 and 5-6, a scanning probe microscope for imaging the surface of a sample, comprising: a sensor (vibration-detecting portion consisting of a quartz oscillator (4), coarse displacement means (6), z-fine displacement element (11)) comprising an oscillator for producing a signal; a probe (1) connected to the sensor; means for scanning the probe (combination of XY fine displacement element (13) and XY scanning circuit (14), col. 3, lines 20-22) with respect to the sample; sensor electronics (combination of current/voltage amplifier (5), z servo circuit (12)) connected to the sensor for monitoring the signal produced by the sensor (col. 5, lines 45-48); and means responsive to the signal produced by the sensor electronics (6, i.e., course displacement means) for moving the probe toward or away from the surface of the sample (col. 6, lines 30-33). Tomita does not disclose an optical microscope disposed with the probe positioned between the optical microscope and the surface of the sample with the probe within a field of view of the optical microscope for viewing a location of the probe mounted to the sensor for helping to position the probe with respect to a region of the surface of the sample to be imaged. Kley shows in Fig. 1,

an optical microscope (160) disposed with a probe (102) positioned between the optical microscope (160) and the surface of the sample (104, i.e., object) with the probe within a field of view of the optical microscope for viewing a location of the probe mounted to the sensor for helping to position the probe with respect to a region of the surface of the sample to be imaged (paragraphs 0151 and 0152). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the optical microscope of Kley to the device of Tomita for the purpose of localizing an area for the placement of tip over the sample.

Regarding claims 2, 4, 6, 9-10, and 12-13, Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. In addition, Tomita discloses that the oscillator (4, i.e., quartz oscillator) is a resonant crystal oscillator (col. 4, lines 9-11) in accordance with claim 2. Also, Tomita provides a resonant crystal oscillator that is self-excited (i.e., requires no input voltage for oscillations) in accordance with claim 4. Tomita shows in Fig. 1 an external modulator (combination of piezoelectric oscillator (2), quartz oscillator holder (25), XY fine displacement (13), and Z fine displacement (11)) is provided proximate to the resonant crystal oscillator, and further comprising an excitation circuit for supplying an excitation signal to drive the modulator (col. 4, lines 3-9 and 57-58) in accordance with claim 6. Tomita discloses a scanning probe microscope comprising a holder for the sensor that facilitates rapid probe exchange (col. 3, lines 51-57) in accordance with claim 9. Tomita further discloses that the oscillator is operated at substantially its resonance frequency (col. 4 lines 9-11) in accordance with claim 10. Tomita also discloses that the oscillator operates in a shear force mode by vibrating the probe approximately parallel to the surface of a sample (col. 3, lines 27-28) in accordance with

claim 12. Tomita further discloses a cantilever (cantilever spring extending from the resilient body (16)) and wherein the probe is mounted to the cantilever and the cantilever is in turn mounted to the sensor to connect the probe to the sensor (col. 4, lines 24-25 and 41-43) in accordance with claim 13. Tomita does not disclose an optical microscope disposed with the probe positioned between the optical microscope and the surface of the sample with the probe within a field of view of the optical microscope for viewing a location of the probe mounted to the sensor for helping to position the probe with respect to a region of the surface of the sample to be imaged. Kley shows in Fig. 1, an optical microscope (160) disposed with a probe (102) positioned between the optical microscope (160) and the surface of the sample (104, i.e., object) with the probe within a field of view of the optical microscope for viewing a location of the probe mounted to the sensor for helping to position the probe with respect to a region of the surface of the sample to be imaged (paragraphs 0151 and 0152). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the optical microscope of Kley to the device of Tomita for the purpose of localizing an area for the placement of tip over the sample.

5. Claims 3, 5 and 7 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,227 B1) in view of Kley (Publication No. U.S. 2002/0135755 A1) as applied to claim 2 above, and further in view of Sato (U.S. Patent No. 6,046,448).

Regarding claims 3 and 5, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose that the resonant crystal oscillator is a quartz crystal cross oscillator that is self-excited

comprising a crystal base and an arm to which the probe is connected. Sato shows in Figs. 3-5 a cross crystal oscillator (18) is self-excited (i.e., requires no input voltage for oscillations). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the cross crystal oscillator of Sato to the modified device of Tomita for the purpose of improving heat dissipation during oscillation.

Regarding claim 7, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose an external modulator provided proximate to a quartz crystal cross oscillator. Sato shows in Figs. 3-5 a cross crystal oscillator (25). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the cross crystal oscillator of Sato to the modified device of Tomita for the purpose of improving heat dissipation during oscillation.

6. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,227 B1) in view of Kley (Publication No. U.S. 2002/0135755 A1).

Regarding claim 11, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claim invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose a scanning probe microscope wherein the resonance frequency is greater than 400 kHz. It has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum measurements involves only routine skill in the art. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide a crystal oscillator having a resonant frequency greater than 400 kHz the modified device of Tomita for the purpose of providing a better resolution of three-dimensional image.

7. Claims 14-15, 18-20, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,227 B1) in view of Kley (Publication No. U.S. 2002/0135755 A1) as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Chen (U.S. Patent No. 6,169,281).

Regarding claim 14, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose that the means for scanning the probe with respect to the sample comprises a first electromechanical transducer and a second electromechanical transducer, the first electromechanical transducer having a first resonant frequency and the second electromechanical transducer having a second resonant frequency substantially lower than the first resonant frequency, and wherein the means responsive to the signal produced by the sensor electronics for moving the probe toward or away from the surface of the sample comprises a third electromechanical transducer having a third resonant frequency substantially higher than the first resonant frequency. Chen shows in Fig. 8, that the means for scanning the probe with respect to the sample comprises a first electromechanical transducer (162 and 164, i.e., -X electrode and +X electrode), the first electromechanical transducer having a first resonant frequency (col.15, lines 34-36), and the second electromechanical transducer (172 and 174, i.e., -Y electrode and +Y electrode) having a second resonant frequency (col.15, lines 36-37) substantially lower than the first resonant frequency, and wherein the means responsive to the signal produced by the sensor electronics for moving the probe toward or away from the surface of the sample comprises a third electromechanical transducer (184,

i.e., excitation electrode) having a third resonant frequency substantially higher than the first resonant frequency (col. 15, lines 37-40). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the first, second and third electromechanical transducers of Chen to the modified device of Tomita for the purpose of providing a high response to a wide range of voltage signals.

Regarding claims 15, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose the first electromechanical transducer scans in an X direction and has a resonant frequency $R(X)$, the second electromechanical transducer scans in a Y direction and has a resonant frequency $R(Y)$, and the third electromechanical transducer scans in a Z direction and has a resonant frequency $R(Z)$, and $R(Z) \gg R(X) \gg R(Y)$. Chen discloses that the first electromechanical transducer scans in an X direction and has a resonant frequency $R(X)$, the second electromechanical transducer scans in a Y direction and has a resonant frequency $R(Y)$, and the third electromechanical transducer scans in a Z direction and has a resonant frequency $R(Z)$, and $R(Z) \gg R(X) \gg R(Y)$ (col. 15, lines 37-40 and 60-61). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the first, second and third electromechanical transducers of Chen to the modified device of Tomita for the purpose of obtaining a high response to a wide range of voltage signals.

Regarding claim 18, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose that the means responsive to the signal produced by the sensor electronics for moving the probe toward or away from the surface of the sample comprises a first feedback loop for

producing a first control signal, a first electromechanical transducer having a first resonant frequency, a second feedback loop for producing a second control signal, and a second electromechanical transducer having a second resonant frequency, the first resonant frequency being lower than the second resonant frequency. Chen shows in Figs. 8-9, that the means responsive to the signal produced by the sensor electronics for moving the probe toward or away from the surface of the sample comprises a first feedback loop (a laser detector (138), band pass filter (244), x demodulator (243), ADC (250), computing system (144), DAC (193), amp (192), X-axis driver (118)) for producing a first control signal (col. 6, lines 21-22), a first electromechanical transducer (162 and 164, i.e., X-electrodes) having a first resonant frequency, a second feedback loop (a laser detector (138), band pass filter (140), z demodulator (141), comparison circuit (142), integrator (148), ADC (149) computing system (144), DAC (154), Z-axis driver (126)) for producing a second control signal (col. 6, lines 24-25), and a second electromechanical transducer (184, i.e., excitation electrode) having a second resonant frequency, the first resonant frequency being lower than the second resonant frequency (col. 6, lines 20-25). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the first, second and third electromechanical transducers of Chen comprising feedback loops to the modified device of Tomita for the purpose of providing greater control of tip motion.

Regarding claim 19, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose a scanning probe microscope, wherein the first electromechanical transducer is employed to level

the surface of the sample with respect to the sensor, whereby a range of motion imparted by the second electromechanical transducer to the probe is small. Chen discloses that the first electromechanical transducer is employed to level the surface of the sample with respect to the sensor, whereby a range of motion imparted by the second electromechanical transducer (184, i.e., excitation electrode) to the probe is small (col. 8, lines 13-24). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the first and second transducers of Chen to the modified device of Tomita, having a small range of motion for the purpose of maintaining stability of tip motion.

Regarding claim 20, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not that the motions imparted by the first and second electromechanical transducers to the probe are orthogonal to the motion imparted to the probe by the third electromechanical transducer, whereby a range of motion imparted by the third electromechanical transducer to the probe is less than a range of motion imparted to the probe by the first and second electromechanical transducers. Chen shows in Fig. 8, that the motions imparted by the first and second electromechanical transducers to the probe are orthogonal to the motion imparted to the probe by the third electromechanical transducer (col. 6, lines 55-58), whereby a range of motion imparted by the third electromechanical transducer to the probe is less than a range of motion imparted to the probe by the first and second electromechanical transducers (Figs. 10-11). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the provide the first, second and third electromechanical transducers of Chen to the modified device of Tomita where

motions of the first and second electromechanical transducers are orthogonal to the third transducer for the purpose of generating a tip motion that results in a signal producing a three dimensional image.

8. Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,227 B1) in view of Kley (Publication No. U.S. 2002/0135755 A1) and Chen (U.S. Patent No. 6,169,281) as applied to claim 15 above, and further in view of Furukawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,207,069 B1).

Regarding claim 16, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose that the electromechanical transducers that are piezoelectric ceramic actuators. Furukawa shows in Figs. 1-3 a ceramic piezoelectric actuator. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art provide the ceramic piezoelectric actuator of Furukawa to the modified device of Tomita for the purpose of producing the piezoelectric actuator at a lower cost.

9. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita) in view of Kley (Publication No. U.S. 2002/0135755 A1) and Chen (U.S. Patent No. 6,169,281) as applied to claim 15 above, and further in view of Normen (U.S. Patent No. 6,577,977 B2).

Regarding claim 17, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose that the first electromechanical transducer is a voice coil and the second and third electromechanical transducers are piezoelectric ceramic actuators. Normen shows in Fig. 6, a transducer comprising a voice coil. It would have been obvious to provide the transducer of

Normen to the modified device of Tomita for the purpose of providing low cost, overall performance.

10. Claims 21-22, and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,227 B1) in view of Chen (U.S. Patent No. 6,169,281).

Regarding claim 21, Tomita shows in Figs.1 and 5-6, a scanning probe microscope for imaging the surface of a sample, comprising: a) a sensor (vibration-detecting portion consisting of a quartz oscillator (4), coarse displacement means (6), z-fine displacement element (11)) comprising an oscillator for producing a signal, a probe (1) connected to the sensor, and c) sensor electronics (combination of current/voltage amplifier (5), z servo circuit (12)) connected to the sensor for monitoring the signal produced by the sensor (col. 5, lines 45-48). Tomita does not disclose a means for scanning the probe with respect to the sample comprising a first electromechanical transducer and a second electromechanical transducer, the first electromechanical transducer having a first resonant frequency and the second electromechanical transducer having a second resonant frequency substantially lower than the first resonant frequency; and means responsive to the signal produced by the sensor electronics for moving the probe toward or away from the surface of the sample comprising a third electromechanical transducer having a third resonant frequency substantially higher than the first resonant frequency. Chen shows in Fig. 8 a means for scanning the probe with respect to the sample comprising a first electromechanical transducer (162 and 164, i.e., -X electrode and +X electrode) and a second

electromechanical transducer (172 and 174, i.e., -Y electrode and +Y electrode), the first electromechanical transducer having a first resonant frequency and the second electromechanical transducer having a second resonant frequency substantially lower than the first resonant frequency (col.15, lines 34-37); and means responsive to the signal produced by the sensor electronics for moving the probe toward or away from the surface of the sample comprising a third electromechanical transducer (184, i.e., excitation electrode) having a third resonant frequency substantially higher than the first resonant frequency (col.15, lines 34-40). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the first second and third electromechanical transducers of Chen to the device of Tomita for the purpose of obtaining a high response to a wide range of voltage signals.

Regarding claim 22, Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above.

Tomita does not disclose the first electromechanical transducer scans in an X direction and has a resonant frequency $R(X)$, the second electromechanical transducer scans in a Y direction and has a resonant frequency $R(Y)$, and the third electromechanical transducer scans in a Z direction and has a resonant frequency $R(Z)$, and $R(Z) \gg R(X) \gg R(Y)$. Chen discloses that the first electromechanical transducer scans in an X direction and has a resonant frequency $R(X)$, the second electromechanical transducer scans in a Y direction and has a resonant frequency $R(Y)$, and the third electromechanical transducer scans in a Z direction and has a resonant frequency $R(Z)$, and $R(Z) \gg R(X) \gg R(Y)$ (col. 15, lines 37-40 and 60-61). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the first, second and third electromechanical

transducers of Chen to the device of Tomita for the purpose of obtaining a high response to a wide range of voltage signals.

Regarding claim 25, Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. Tomita does not that the motions imparted by the first and second electromechanical transducers to the probe are orthogonal to the motion imparted to the probe by the third electromechanical transducer, whereby a range of motion imparted by the third electromechanical transducer to the probe is less than a range of motion imparted to the probe by the first and second electromechanical transducers. Chen shows in Fig. 8, that the motions imparted by the first and second electromechanical transducers to the probe are orthogonal to the motion imparted to the probe by the third electromechanical transducer (col. 6, lines 55-58), whereby a range of motion imparted by the third electromechanical transducer to the probe is less than a range of motion imparted to the probe by the first and second electromechanical transducers (Figs. 10-11). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the provide the first, second and third electromechanical transducers of Chen to the modified device of Tomita where motions of the first and second electromechanical transducers are orthogonal to the third transducer for the purpose of generating a tip motion that results in a signal producing a three dimensional image.

11. Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,227 B1) in view of Chen (U.S. Patent No. 6,169,281) as applied to claim 21 above, and further in view of Furukawa (U.S. Patent No. 6,207,069 B1).

Regarding claim 23, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose that the electromechanical transducers that are piezoelectric ceramic actuators. Furukawa shows in Figs. 1-3 a ceramic piezoelectric actuator. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art provide the ceramic piezoelectric actuator of Furukawa to the device of Tomita for the purpose of producing the piezoelectric actuator at a lower cost.

12. Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,227 B1) in view of Chen (U.S. Patent No. 6,169,281) as applied to claim 21 above, and further in view of Normen (U.S. Patent No. 6,577,977 B2).

Regarding claim 24, Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. Tomita does not disclose that the first electromechanical transducer is a voice coil and the second and third electromechanical transducers are piezoelectric ceramic actuators. Normen shows in Fig. 6, a transducer comprising a voice coil. It would have been obvious to provide the transducer of Normen to the device of Tomita for the purpose of providing low cost, overall performance.

13. Claim 26 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita (U.S. Patent No. 6,201,227 B1) in view of Chen (U.S. Patent No. 6,169,281) as applied to claim 21 above, and further in view of Kley (Publication No. U.S. 2002/0135755 A1).

Regarding claim 26, the modified device of Tomita discloses the claimed invention as stated above. The modified device of Tomita does not disclose the scanning probe microscope comprises an optical microscope for viewing the location of the probe mounted to the sensor. Kley shows in Fig. 1, an optical microscope (160) for

viewing a location of the probe mounted to the sensor (paragraphs 0151 and 0152). It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art to provide the optical microscope of Kley to the device of modified Tomita for the purpose of localizing an area for the placement of tip over the sample.

Allowable Subject Matter

14. Claim 8 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

15. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter:

Claim 8 is allowable because the prior art fails to disclose or make obvious, either singly or in combination, a scanning probe microscope, comprising, in addition to the other recited features of the claim, a scanning probe microscope operable in a mode selected from the modes of magnetic force microscopy and electrostatic force microscopy and the signal produced by the sensor is used to determine characteristics of the sample selected from among the characteristics of magnetic and electrostatic properties, respectively.

Response to Arguments

16. Applicant's arguments filed 04/14/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to applicant's argument that, the probe disclosed in the Tomita Patent is not in the field of view of the optical viewing system, and that the configuration of Tomita Patent does not enable the operator to readily position the probe over a region of the surface of a sample to be imaged, the examiner disagrees. First, according to col. 5, lines 4-7 and col. 6, lines 30-32, the coarse displacement means 6 enables probe to be placed at various points over the sample. This feature enables the operator to position the probe over a region of the sample. In addition, Fig. 5 shows an embodiment where the probe (1) is positioned in the field of view of the optical viewing system (elements 7, 8, 23, 24 and 29) over sample (17).

In response to applicant's argument that, the Tomita Patent does not disclose operation at a resonance frequency greater than 400khz as recited in claim 11, the examiner addresses this claim in the 103 rejection, wherein optimizing a device such as disclosed in the Tomita to operate at a preferred resonant frequency above 400 Hz requires only routine skill in the art.

In response to applicant's argument that, the Chen Patent only discloses that the difference between the dithering vibration frequencies in the X- and Y- directions is "sufficiently separated from one another to allow the separate detection of their effects on actual vibration in the Z-direction," and therefore fails to disclose that there is a substantial difference between the dithering vibration frequencies in the X- and Y- direction, the examiner disagrees. Chen clearly indicates in Col. 15, lines 59-60 that "the Y-axis dithering frequency is the lowest of the three frequencies of vibration," which also requires a low pass-filter 248.

In response to applicant's argument that, the Chen Patent fails to disclose that it is critical that the resonant frequency of the actuator producing motion along the slower scanning axis be substantially less than the resonant frequency of the actuator producing motion along the faster scanning axis, the Chen patent discloses in col. 10, lines 24-30, this necessity for reasons of repetitive movement used to optimize detection of a wall extending along a sample, and for very long scanning movements along a sample.

In response to applicant's argument that, the Chen Patent disclosure to which the examiner refers does not disclose or suggest the structure recited in pending dependent claim 18 comprising two electromechanical transducers for moving the probe toward or away from the sample. The two electromechanical transducers for moving the probe toward or away from the sample are first electromechanical transducer (162 and 164, i.e., X-electrodes) having a first resonant frequency, second electromechanical transducer (184, i.e., excitation electrode)(col. 6, lines 20-25).

In response to applicant's argument that, the disclosures on the Furukawa and Normen Patents do not cure the deficiencies of the disclosures in the Tomita and Chen Patents, the examiner disagrees. The piezoelectric ceramic actuator disclosed in Furukawa and the transducer disclosed in Normen cures the deficiencies in Tomita and Chen.

Conclusion

17. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

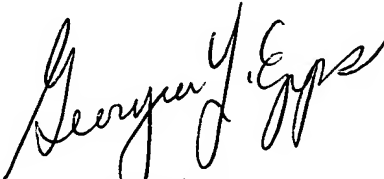
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kevin Wyatt whose telephone number is (571)-272-5974. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Georgia Epps can be reached on (571)-272-2328. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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K.W.

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